

District of Columbia State Data Center Monthly Brief

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Asians in the U.S. and in the District of Columbia

Introduction

Information published by the Census Bureau reveals several facts about the Asian population in the United States. In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869. In 1992, Congress expanded the 10-day observance to a month long celebration. Per a 1997 Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific islander racial category was separated into two different categories: "Asian", and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander." This report focuses on the demographic characteristics of Asians in the United States (Asian-Americans) and in the District of Columbia in particular. Asians-Americans are defined as people who originate from places like India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Asian-Americans Nationally

The Census Bureau estimated that there were 14 million people residing in the United States in July 2004 who said they were Asian or Asian in combination with one or more other races. This group comprised 5 percent of the total population. Twenty-six percent of people on July 1, 2004, identifying themselves as either Asian or Asian in combination with one or more other races are under 18; 8 percent are 65 or older. California had both the largest Asian population (4.8 million) and the largest numerical increase (123,000) of people of this group since July 2003. However, Hawaii is the state where Asians made up the highest proportion of the total population (58 percent). The Asian popula-

tion in the U.S. has increased by 3.4 percent between 2003 and 2004, the highest increase of any race group during this period.

According to the Census Bureau, the number of U.S. residents in 2050 who will identify themselves as Asians is projected at 33.4 million. They would comprise 8 percent of the total population by that year. This represents an increase of 213 percent between 2000 and 2050 in the population of people who identify themselves as Asian. This compares with a 49 percent increase in the population as a whole over the same period of time.

Education

Forty-nine percent of Asians, age 25 and older, have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Asians have the highest proportion of college graduates of any race or ethnic group in the country. Eighty-seven percent of Asians, age 25 and older, are high school graduates; 20 percent have an advanced degree (e.g., master's, Ph.D., M.D.). The Asian population is comprised of many groups who differ in languages spoken, culture and length of residence in the United States. This is reflected in the demographic characteristics of these groups. For instance, 68 percent of Asian Indians, age 25 and older, had a bachelor's degree or more education and 37 percent had a graduate or professional degree; the corresponding numbers for Vietnamese-American were 24 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Income and Poverty

The median household income for Asians in 2004 (\$57,518), was the highest among all race groups. Median household income differed greatly by Asian group. For Asian Indians, for example, the median income in 2004 was \$68,771; for Vietnamese-Americans, it was \$45,980. The poverty rate
ASIANS IN THE USA & DC *cont. on page 2*

by
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ASIANS IN THE USA & DC from page 1

for Asians in 2004 was 9.8 percent, down from 11.8 percent in 2003.

Businesses

The number of Asian businesses was 1.1 million in 2002, up 24 percent from 1997. Their receipts totaled \$343.3 billion in 2002, up 13 percent from 1997. An estimated 319,911 Asian-owned businesses had paid employees; and their receipts totaled \$307.6 billion, or about \$961,379 per firm. About 28 percent of Asian-American-owned firms were in health care and other services, with another 14 percent each in professional services and retail trade. Asian-American-owned firms accounted for 45 percent of businesses in Hawaii, 13 percent of firms in California and 9 percent in New York.

Languages

There were 2.3 million people age 5 and older who speak Chinese at home in 2004. After Spanish, Chinese is the most widely spoken non-English language in the country. Tagalog and Vietnamese also have more than 1 million speakers.

Coming to America

The number of U.S. residents who were born in Asia totaled 8.7 million in 2004. An estimated 1.8 million of foreign-born are people from China. Following Mexico, China is the leading country of birth for the nation's foreign-born. Other nations contributing at least one million foreign-born to our nation include India and the Philippines. Asian-born residents comprise one-fourth of the nation's total foreign-born population. Fifty-two percent of Asian-born residents are naturalized U.S. citizens.

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Government of the District of Columbia

Asians in the District of Columbia

In Census 2000, there were 15,189 persons living in the District of Columbia that listed their race as Asian alone, thereby comprising 2.7 percent of the District's population. Of this number, 6,691 (44 percent) were male and 8,498 (56 percent) were female. Fourteen percent of the Asian population were less than 18 years old, while 7 percent were 65 years and older. Among all Asians in the District, the largest numbers of foreign born are from China (2,650), and most live in the Chinatown area. The second largest group is from Vietnam (1,557), and they mainly reside in the Mt. Pleasant/Columbia Heights area. Immigrants from India (1,382) and Korea (817) comprise the next highest ranked Asian groups. The 2004 American Community Survey (ACS) showed the Asian population at 15,244 (group quarters are not included in this survey). Most Asians in the District

resides in Wards 1, 2 and 3 or in census tracts that are mostly in the western sections of the city as depicted in the map below. In terms of social characteristics, 82 percent of Asians 25 years and over were high school graduates or higher, and 58 percent had a bachelor degree or higher. Their median household income for 2000 was \$36,031. Individuals below poverty numbered 3,098.

According to the Survey of Business Owners conducted by the US Census Bureau, there were 2,415 Asian owned businesses in the District in 2002. Their sales and receipts totaled over 1 billion dollars and they employed about 10,000 persons. The DC Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs states that thousands more Asians, especially those from Korea, do business in the District but live in the outlying suburbs.

